

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Special Collections

4-16-1964

What Now?

J. I. S.

University of Maine

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

S., J. I., "What Now?" (1964). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 523.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/523

This Opinion Piece is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

What Now?

Street Scene: Saturday, April 11

The still, sharp spring wind drifts papers, old pop-corn sacks, and dirt into the gutters of Bangor. A short, red-faced man plays "Nearer My God To Thee," and his somber uniformed crew sing haltingly of a "promised land." Just down the street a woman, well-dressed and past middle age, stops to talk to a fat, pimple-faced boy carrying a placard saying "Put the Bible back in the schools."

In a nation that professes tolerance we're mighty slow in doing anything that resembles tolerance. Maine failed to pass a law requiring housing to be anti-discriminatory. The nation's Senate is now embroiled in a debate that may well end in crippling amendments to a law of tolerance. And a racist polls 250,000 votes in Wisconsin. What does this all mean?

We are living in a frightened society. Each of us is so afraid of standing alone with no artificial props of station. We here in the University can see this in our every action. We wear seemingly special clothes. We speak a special language—existentialism, homeostasis, and socialization. We pass our peers in the hallways and on sidewalks, closed-mouthed and unsmiling. Each microcosm struggles in its orbit, bouncing off others, never really caring. Perhaps the problem will not end with a simple passage of a bill to end segregation, but it certainly would be a beginning.

We have much work to do. If a man's success depends upon his being a white Christian, then this is not the society that we say it is. We segregate ourselves quite naturally by interest. Witness the congregation by college and major in the Bear's Den. This is to be expected and normal. But it is not the stupid, ignorant segregation by skin color and creed. Our legislative laxity has allowed one hundred years of injustice to go on. If it takes federal action to rectify this situation, then let's have it.

All the civil rights bill asks is that decent, respectable people have the right to public accommodations, parks, etc. Voting privileges for the disfranchised, school integration, equal job opportunities, and equal protection under law are other considerations mentioned and needed. Surely no one can argue that these rights are not too much to request. There is also a provision to aid people unable by financial consideration to secure their just rights by expediting court proceedings and aiding them in bringing suits.

The sad thing in all of this is that we have reduced human beings to the state that they must fight, cajole, beg, and march for rights that should be theirs by birthright. Members of all races and creeds have fought for "our side" in two world wars and the Korean situation. Negroes are in service at all points of crises around the world. It seems as though they are good enough to stop a bullet for us, but not good enough to go to the toilet in a public restroom.

—J. I. S.